



CFSA Fact Sheet



LaShawn A. v Williams

Implementation Plan Provides Blueprint for Reform

On May 15, 2003, District Judge Thomas F. Hogan approved a final, long-term Implementation Plan in the *LaShawn A. v. Williams* lawsuit, which seeks to reform the District's child welfare system. The Implementation Plan provides a blueprint for establishing a strong safety net for abused/neglected children and troubled families in the District. It also spells out what the city must do to comply with all terms and conditions of the lawsuit, providing an opportunity to end court oversight of child welfare in the District in 2007.

"This is a major milestone in the District's commitment to child welfare reform," said Mayor Anthony A. Williams. "In the past two years, we have demonstrated our capacity for positive change. We now look forward to building on this momentum to construct the strong safety net District children and families deserve."

"The Implementation Plan presents both great challenges and opportunities," said Olivia Golden, director, Child and Family Services. "It provides a blueprint for realizing the level of service and positive outcomes we all want to achieve for children and families over the next three years."

The final Implementation Plan, negotiated among the plaintiffs, District officials, and court-appointed monitor at the Center for the Study of Social Policy:

- Addresses **all key aspects of child welfare administration and operations**—from staffing and caseload levels, investigation of child abuse/neglect reports, foster care and adoption practices, and services for children and families to contracting and information systems.
- Prescribes **standards in terms of specific outcomes and strategies** for achieving safety, permanence, and well being of children and families involved in the District's public child protective system.
- Establishes **progressive time frames for performance** at intervals from June 30, 2003, through Dec. 31, 2006. In addition to June 30, deadlines in 2003 also fall at the end of September and December.
- Holds the District's **Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)** accountable for achieving performance goals, while also containing requirements that affect **Family**

Court, the Corporation Counsel, other District agencies (such as the Departments of Mental Health and Human Services), and **community providers** under contract to CFSA.

- Makes the District accountable for providing **sufficient funding** to achieve child welfare performance goals.

Overview of Requirements

Among major requirements in the 69-page Implementation Plan are the following.

Protective Services	Policies/procedures for investigating reports of child abuse/neglect and providing health and mental health screening of at-risk children and child victims. Requires both CFSA and District review of all fatalities of children known to CFSA for four years.
Services to Children and Families	Requires rapid access to community-based and/or District agency respite services, parent education/counseling, mental health and substance abuse treatment, housing assistance, day care, and intensive home-based services. Prescribes practices to improve service delivery.
Emergency Care	
General Assistance	Access to welfare payments for children in the care of adults who are not their family members
Placement of Children	Standards for placing children who must be removed from their homes, sharing information with foster parents and other providers, and providing medical/dental care for children in out-of-home care
Planning	Time frames for establishing and reviewing case plans for children and families in the system and standards and time frames for holding parent-child visits when the family's goal is reunification
Adoption/ Post-Adoption	Time frames for CFSA and Family Court regarding adoptive placement and finalization and access to post-adoptive services
Supervision of Placement	Frequency of social worker visits to children in out-of-home placement
Case Review System	Time frames and standards for CFSA to establish and review case plans for families and children and to hold permanency hearings for foster children. Requirements for quality assurance within CFSA.
Caseloads, Staffing, and Worker Qualification	Standards and time frames for number of cases assigned to CFSA social workers and staffing levels for CFSA social workers and selected support functions and legal staff of the Corporation Counsel assigned to CFSA
Training	Standards and time frames for initial and in-service training of CFSA social workers, supervisors, and foster and adoptive parents
Resource Development	Planning and time frames for increased recruitment of foster parents and expanded partnerships with neighborhood-based providers and other District agencies to serve children and families in the child protective system
Contract Review	Standards and time frames for enhancing CFSA's Contracts & Procurement function and for establishing performance-based contracts with providers serving children and families in the child protective system
Information Systems	Time frames for ensuring that CFSA data collection and reporting is accurate and reliable in tracking performance progress
Financial Development	Requirements for CFSA to maximize federal revenue and for the District to provide sufficient budgetary support to achieve court-ordered performance goals

The court-appointed monitor at the District-based Center for the Study of Social Policy will continue to monitor District progress in complying with the Implementation Plan through the end date of Dec. 31, 2006. Failure to meet interim performance targets may trigger further legal action from the plaintiffs. n